

Testimony Presented to the Government Administration and Elections Committee
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Testimony Regarding
Senate Bill 148
*An Act Eliminating the Requirement for the
Purchase of Artwork for State Building Projects*

Senator Slossberg, Representative Morin and members of the GAE Committee: My name is Randy Fiveash. I am the acting executive director of the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism. Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on the Commission on Culture & Tourism's opposition to Senate Bill 148: An Act Eliminating the Requirements for the Purchase of Artwork for State Building Projects.

Connecticut's One Percent for Art Program is a minimal investment that brings substantial economic benefits to communities across the state. Public works of art, no matter the scale, create jobs and stimulate business activity. According to the Public Art Network of Americans for the Arts, ten (10) jobs are supported by every public artwork commissioned. These include artists, designers, architects, photographers, engineers, fabricators, electricians, material suppliers, installers, and various types of assistants, to name a few. Public artworks require transportation, site preparation, lighting, landscaping, insurance, and a host of services from small businesses. The creation and installation of a public artwork is a dynamic contributor to small business development. Among the beneficiaries are the creative industries made up of talented workers who are either self-employed free-lancers or free-lancers employed by micro-enterprises.

Since the inception of the state's Percent for Art program in 1978, public artwork has improved the visual quality and appearance of state buildings and public university campuses across the state – from Stamford to Windham, and New Britain to Storrs. The artwork forms part of the cultural assets of communities and has made public buildings and university campuses attractive places to work and visit. Many of the artworks have also served as educational tools and are incorporated into university course curricula.

Public art is accessible for all to experience and enjoy. It stimulates a democratic appreciation of art by Connecticut citizens. Each installed artwork connects with citizens and visitors and helps them understand both the purpose of public structures and the services provided by public buildings and sites.

Repealing the requirement for the commission of artwork for state buildings will have a negative impact on the creation and retention of jobs, as well as be a disservice to the citizens of Connecticut. I urge you not to support Senate Bill 148.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my comments.